

NEWSMAKER SATURDAY
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The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____
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MR. BIERBAUER: Mr. Ledeen, does Moorhead Kennedy raise a new dimension here by suggesting that, in fact, this was a kidnapping, that there is a crime that has been committed?

MR. LEDEEN: No. It's just further fantasy. That is, without any evidence that the thing happened, Moorhead Kennedy is now giving us the meta-analysis, which is the meaning of what it is that never happened.

And, in any case, if anything's involved here, I think you can accuse them of participating in blackmail of one sort or another, rather than kidnapping. I mean, the crime had already been committed by the time these people were dealing with it.

I'd just like to raise one additional point. If this, in fact, happened and if they were dealing with the Iranians, we know enough from the Iranians, every time the Iranians met with somebody, they photographed them and they took records of the meeting. They would have enough to shake down first the Reagan and now the Bush administration for most anything they wanted. And yet, both the Reagan and the Bush administration have been exceedingly reluctant to deal openly with Iran and to establish channels--

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's a pretty wild statement for somebody who was himself involved in the Iran-contra affair where the Iranians got a great deal out of us--maybe by blackmail. It certainly wasn't by logic.

MR. BIERBAUER: Let me ask you, Admiral, is Bill Casey, the former CIA director, an easy scapegoat in this whole affair?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, there's no question that this is right up Casey's alley. And what bothers me about the White House not producing the evidence is, I want to give the president the benefit of every doubt. And I don't really think he would have been so foolish as to go to Paris two weeks before an election and try to do a clandestine deal. Mr. Casey, certainly, right up his alley.

If the Bush people, in their sense of innocence, don't want to produce the records on George Bush, it may be because if they did they'd have to produce the records on Bill Casey, and those probably would show he was in Paris, in my opinion.

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MR. BIERBAUER: You were CIA director at the time, and I know you've been asked this question before: would you or should you have known about such a meeting?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, I don't think so. I did not know, and because we were dealing with an obscure--they were supposedly dealing with an obscure Iranian who nobody still knows--Karrubi--and an obscure Israeli, and since we don't follow Americans and since, even if we did detect this, the rules would be that we couldn't have listened in on a conversation with George Bush or Bill Casey or Don Gregg, I don't think it's highly likely that the CIA would have known about this.

MR. BIERBAUER: Let me ask Ambassador Farhang in New York, you served as ambassador while Abulhassan Banisadr was president of Iran. He has a book coming out shortly. Do you know of any revelations in that book? Does it shed any new light?

AMBASSADOR FARHANG: As a witness again, he can explain certain events of the past that only in the context of the recent revelations make sense. You see, we have to understand that the Iranians have a very vested interest to keep this secret because they presented entirely a different picture to their own constituency, and it would be gravely damaging to the fundamentalist regime in Tehran if their story is conclusively proven today.

I think Banisadr as a witness can be very valuable in shedding light on this story. But he doesn't have conclusive evidence to prove it in such a way that the court can accept it.

MR. BIERBAUER: Let me ask you one other thing as a former Iranian diplomat. How does this all play into the current state of affairs, with Iran and Iraq and the Persian Gulf? Does this have any relevance right now?

AMBASSADOR FARHANG: Yes, it does. I think since the Iran-contra affair that particularly the revelation that Ollie North and Robert McFarlane actually spent some time in Tehran, that was absolutely undeniable.

In the region, the fundamentalists who followed the Teh Tehran regime began to have suspicion about the intention and the real commitment of the rulers in Tehran. Once again, this story is discrediting the ideological or theological claims of the government in Tehran, and presenting them as fundamentally a group of Machiavellian operators who are pursuing their own power-oriented interests without any kind of concern for the well-being of the Iranian people, or the general legitimate concerns of oppressed minorities throughout the region.

In that sense, it is a very important story for the people in the region to know about.